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ABSTRACT

This student guide is intended to assist persons employed as supervisors to improve their speaking skills. Discussed in the three sections are the following topics: interaction between the speaker and listener (using appropriate verbal and body language for different audiences); purposeful speaking and listening (planning and preparing a discussion, steering a discussion, and sticking to the point as a listener); and speaking on one's own (speaking techniques and speaking from notes). Each of these sections contains an introduction, instructional text interspersed with reinforcing learning activities, and a summary for each section. The fourth part of the guide includes a series of performance checks (an end check, a tutor check, and a work-based project). A unit review, which also includes a description of related extension courses and resources, concludes the guide. (MN)

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An Open Tech Project

SUPERVISING COMMUNICATION

61: Speaking Skills

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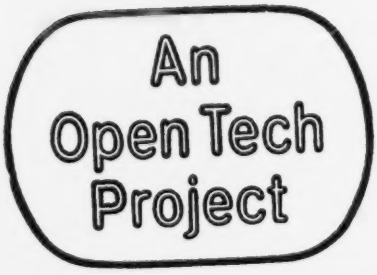
61: SPEAKING SKILLS

Diana Thomas



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Thomas Diana
Speaking Skills (Number 61 in the CHOICE SERIES of learning units)

Series Editor: Harry V Pardue
Northern Regional Management Centre.

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WORKING GUIDE TO THIS UNIT IN YOUR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

This Unit is now your personal property - it's not for handing back to your training officer or to a tutor. It is your working book.

The Contents will increase in value to you each time you write on one of its pages. This is a working text for your personal notes - without notes its value is limited.

Qualifications forget about certificates and diplomas - you don't need them for this programme. What you do need is the wish:-

* to do your job better
* for personal development

Your study time is really up to you - we guess you will need about 8 hours in total. But it's your time - spend as long as you like.

How am I doing? you can judge for yourself by checking out how well you cope with the tasks we call Activities and Self Checks which occur throughout the unit. You can also get the Tutor Check and/or the Work Based Project to your tutor for an unbiased view of your progress.

Work Pace it's really up to you and depends on your interest. However, if you do well on the Activities and Self Checks, you could afford to speed up a little. Of course, if you don't do as well as you expect then you could slow down a little or flick back into the unit for a quick review of the more difficult ideas.

When in doubt - ask or seek help from:

* your family and friends
* colleagues at work
* your company training staff
* other open learners
* your tutor, by phone, by a visit to your support centre or by dropping your tutor a line through the post.

Don't worry if what you learn doesn't seem to be of use to you now, remember that times change - it may be useful one day. Anyway, just knowing more improves personal confidence.

So now make a start:-

61: SPEAKING SKILLS by Diana Thomas

ABOUT THIS UNIT

As a supervisor you probably spend a large part of your day talking and listening to people - in informal conversations, meetings, interviews, on the telephone. Talking and listening are two sides of the same coin - one is not usually much use without the other and being able to do both effectively is an essential skill for anyone who has to deal with and supervise other people.

As a supervisor you may find that you occasionally have to stand up and talk to an audience. This is always a nerve-wracking experience no matter how often you do it but learning a few simple techniques can make it less of an ordeal for you - and your audience.

IN THIS UNIT WE WILL:

* identify the skills which make a good speaker/listener

* examine some techniques which enable us to give a confident performance when we have to speak

AUDIO TAPE Side 1

Before you continue through the unit, you should listen to side 1 of the audio tape that accompanies this unit. You will find it useful if you refer to the unit objectives shown below whilst you listen to the tape. You may wish to make the objectives clearer to yourself by making a note or two on the page as you listen.

OBJECTIVES

When you have completed this unit you will be BETTER ABLE TO:

* adapt how you speak and your non-verbal communication to the needs of your listeners

* plan, prepare and contribute to speaking and listening

* listen effectively

* use simple voice techniques and planning to enable you to give a confident performance

PART A YOU AND YOUR LISTENERS

1. Introduction

Speaking is about making other people understand our thinking so any efforts we make to improve our skills as speakers must focus on how we can make the most of that understanding between us and whoever we are talking to.

Informal chats, telephone calls to customers, suppliers or colleagues, meetings, interviews - most of the talking that we do at work is in the form of a conversation in some way or other. And a successful conversation depends primarily on two things:

an understanding of each other
a willingness to listen

So several of the skills we shall be looking at in this section apply equally to speaking and listening.

2 Who are you talking to?

2.1 How we say it

ACTIVITY 1
Time guide
8 mins

Here are four snatches of conversation. In each one, Samson, a Technical Service Supervisor is speaking. But who is he speaking to? And what is the situation?

Write brief notes to answer these questions in the columns on the right hand side of the page.

	Listener	Situation
Extract 1 Well, as you know I spent four years in Sales for a major competitor, Atkinson's, before I joined this company in 1979. Since then I've worked first of all in Sales and then in Technical Service. I feel I've gained a great deal from the experience - I've had three years' supervisory experience for one thing - and I feel I am more than ready to make a valuable		
Extract 2 Yes, I know what you mean. I spent years in Sales before I got into Tech. Service. Bloody hard slog, isn't it? Still, in this place you have to get some years under your belt before . .		
Extract 3 So I told them the whole bit. Sales, Tech Service, 3 years supervising . . . you know . . . Oh, I don't know. Make us a cup of tea, love, and let's forget about it . . . . . But you would think, wouldn't you? Five years in the job		
Extract 4 Good morning Jack. Samson here. Are you well? . . . Have you? Lucky you . . . No, we went a couple of months ago. Have to start saving for next year now! . . . Yes, you're not kidding! Look Jack, I've run a sample of those printing plates from Tull and Mayberry on our press and I agree. There's some pitting and a caliper variation across the plates outside tolerance . . . . . OK. I'll get the A/55 confirming the complaint off to you today.		

Here are what I thought the situations were:

	Listener	Situation
Extract 1	An interview or interviewing panel. Management in his present company.	A job selection interview. Samson has been asked to talk about his work experience so he's briefly going through it in order to show how he's suitably experienced for the job.
Extract 2	One, maybe more, salesmen. Probably more junior than Samson.	They've been talking about selling and the company - perhaps at lunchtime or over a pint. It sounds as though the salesmen are pretty fed up and Samson is sympathising.
Extract 3	Samson's wife.	After the interview. He didn't get the job.
Extract 4	A salesman in the same company.	On the telephone. The salesman has returned some printing plates which a customer has compained about for Samson to test.

Perhaps your versions are different from mine. That wouldn't be surprising since we only had very brief snatches of conversation to go on and at this stage it doesn't matter if we formed a different view of the situation.

The point is that, from a short extract of a conversation, we feel able to interpret the situations in some way and we feel we understand quite a bit about the relationships between Samson and the various people he is talking to. Obviously the more we heard, the more our first impression would be changed or confirmed.

And we form this undertanding of the situation and the relationship between speaker and listener by picking up clues not only from <u>what</u> is said but from the <u>way</u> it's said.

Look at Samson's snatches of conversation again. In each of them he is speaking in a different way depending on who he's talking to.

ACTIVITY 2
Time guide
6 mins

Jot down in the spaces below a word or a few words which you feel describe the way Samson is speaking in each extract. I've filled in some suggestions for Extract 1 to show you what I mean.

EXTRACT 1	formal, well-organised, confident
EXTRACT 2	
EXTRACT 3	
EXTRACT 4	

Here are some words I should suggest to describe the way Samson speaks in each extract. Your choice may be diferent from mine (that wouldn't be surprising since there are 80,000 words in the English language and the number is rising). But I hope we broadly agree.

EXTRACT 1	formal, well-organised, confident
EXTRACT 2	informal, conversational, sympathetic
EXTRACT 3	very informal, disjointed, unorganised, unhappy
EXTRACT 4	friendly, informal, organised, technical, business-like, difficult to understand

You notice that in each example I've talked about 'formal' and 'informal' ways of speaking.

In a formal situation (and a job selection interview is one) there is a known way of talking and behaving to which we conform. The only real reason for the discussion is to achieve a purpose (to interview somebody for a job in this case) and any other conversation or any other relationship the people there might have is very secondary to that purpose.

In informal communication there isn't such an obvious framework. We talk and behave more spontaneously, perhaps showing more of our individual personalities and we may talk about things other than the basic purpose of the conversation.

Now let's look at each of these extracts in a little more detail to see exactly what it is that makes up the way we speak. To save you having to turn back pages, each extract will be repeated as we come to it.

Extract 1

> 'Well, as you know I spent four years in Sales for a major competitor, Atkinson's, before I joined this company in 1979. Since then I've worked first of all in Sales and then in Technical Service. I feel I've gained a great deal from the experience - I've had three years' supervisory experience for one thing - and Ifeel I am more than ready to make a valuable . . . . .'

Have you noticed how Samson is speaking mainly in complete sentences? We don't usually do this if we are talking informally or expecting somebody to join in the conversation at any moment. But here, Samson knows that he has the floor to himself and that a fairly formal manner is required.

He's explaining things fully to make sure his listeners don't miss any important bits of information. ('I spent four years in Sales for a major competitor, Atkinson's . . . .')

He goes through his work experience in order in an organised way. He sticks to the point and he doesn't use any 'colourful' language like he does in the next extract. He sounds confident without appearing cocky when he says 'I feel I've gained a great deal. . .' and 'I'm more than ready . . .'

Extract 2

> 'Yes, I know what you mean. I spent years in Sales before I got into Tech. Service. Bloody hard slog, isn't it? Still, in this place you have to get some years under your belt before . . . '

It's much more obvious that this is conversation.

Sentences are shorter. He asks a question which will probably just be answered by a smile or a nod. The language is much more colourful ('bloody hard slog' 'get some years under your belt').

He sounds as though he's speaking from experience and understands ('Yes, I know what you mean.' 'Bloody hard slog, isn't it?)

ACTIVITY 3
Time guide
4 mins

Say whether you think the following statements are TRUE OR FALSE.

1) When speaking formally (such as at an interview) sentences are likely to be longer and better constructed than in informal speech (such as conversation with your workteam or other supervisors).

2) Only formal speech needs to be well organised. _____

3) You only speak formally at interviews. _____

1) We tend to use longer and better constructed sentences when we have the floor to ourselves as speakers and our listeners can concentrate first and foremost on listening. This doesn't mean, though, that this kind of language is in any way 'better' than informal speech. It's just a question of which is more suitable to the circumstances, so this statement is true.

2) Your speech needs to be well-organised as often as you can make it at work so this statement is false. If you're chatting among friends or at home it isn't important (unless you're trying to win an argument) but, at work, no matter how informal the circumstances, your workteam, your fellow supervisors and your boss will benefit if your thoughts and the words you use to put them across are well-organised.

Suppose you are taking over from a supervisor on the previous shift and you have a ten minute meeting to hand over. This would probably be very informal but you would want it to be short, complete and thorough if you are not to have problems on your shift. In other words you want what the supervisor on the previous shift says to be organised.

3) Interviews themselves may be more or less formal and can cover a wide range of circumstances. For instance: job selection, grievance handling, disciplinary, appraisal and staff development

Meetings will vary in the degree of formality expected; so this statement is false. A presentation to management about the work being done in your area requires a fairly formal style and, if you find yourself giving evidence in court then proceedings and the way you must speak in the circumstances will be entirely formal.

Now let's have a look at the remaining extracts from Samson's conversations.

Extract 3

'So I told them the whole bit. Sales, Tech Service, 3 years supervising . . . you know . . . Oh, I don't know. Make us a cup of tea, love, and let's forget about it . . . . . But you would think, wouldn't you? Five years in the job . . . . . '

Here the sentences are even shorter and often not completed. This is rather an extreme example but we all tend to talk like this sometimes. It's a kind of thinking aloud and it can only be understood by somebody who knows us very well.

ACTIVITY 4
Time guide
1 min

Does he want his wife to understand:

a) exactly what happened at the interview?

b) his general feeling of disappointment?

I hope we can agree that it is not so much what happened at the interview that he wants his wife to understand as his general feeling of disappointment.

Possibly he doesn't want to discuss the interview in detail much at all ('Oh, I don't know . . . . let's forget about it . . . ') even though he can't leave the subject alone.

What he says is disjointed, even contradictory (you know . . . . Oh I don't know . . . let's forget about it . . . But you would think, wouldn't you?)

He's using words without very precise meaning, rather like sign posts for ideas ('the whole bit . . . you know') and all he does put across is a strong and general mood of disappointment.

In this particular circumstance, it's quite alright for him to talk this way but, at work, in other circumstances where it was important for somebody to understand facts, it would be useless.

Extract 4

'Good morning Jack. Samson here. Are you well? . . . Have you? Lucky you . . . No, we went a couple of months ago. Have to start saving for next year now! . . Yes, you're not kidding! Look Jack, I've run a sample of those printing plates from Tull and Mayberry on our press and I agree. There's some pitting and a caliper variation across the plates outside tolerance . . . . OK. I'll get the A/55 confirming the complaint off to you today. . . '

Samson must be on the telephone since he explains who he is. Talking on the telephone creates a special problem since you con't see who you're talking to and the listener can't see you. So he only has what you say and how you say it to go on to establish a friendly, businesslike mood to the conversation. So it's a good idea, if you're telephoning somebody whom you've met before, to start a business call with a few friendly remarks to set the mood before you get down to business.

Once Samson does get down to business though ('Look Jack') he's well organised even though his manner is informal. He says, briefly and clearly what he's referring to, what he's done, what faults he found and what he's going to do about it.

REFERENCE 1
page 83

ACTIVITY 5
Time guide
2 mins

Do you think somebody from say, the Accounts Department in Samson's company would understand this conversation? YES/NO

Perhaps they would understand what an A55 was but it's unlikely that they would understand (or need to know about) the technical nature of the faults so we can safely say that somebody from Accounts would not understand this conversation.

As he's talking to a technical colleague, Samson can safely use technical language.

Everybody, whatever their job, has some technical language which outsiders won't understand. It may be scientific terms, computer terms, engineering terms, abbreviations, names which identify systems, products, forms. This is called jargon.

ACTIVITY 6
Time guide
3 mins

Jot down a few examples of your own jargon which you use at work.

* _____
* _____
* _____

Of course, I have no way of knowing what terms are on your list. But I expect they are terms which you use confidently with your boss, your workteam and other supervisors doing a very similar job to yourself. Using these jargon terms saves a much more long-winded explanation of what you mean.

9

ACTIVITY 7
Time guide
3 mins

Now jot down a list of people who work in the same place as you who wouldn't understand your jargon, starting with the people you are most likely to see at work.

* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____

Everybody's list would be different. Mine looks like this:

* secretary;
* colleagues who work in different areas from me;
* managers who work in different areas from me;
* clients;
* clerical staff.

ACTIVITY 8
Time guide
3 mins

Now imagine having a conversation with somebody from your list in which you use several technical terms without explaining them. Jot down a few words to describe how that person will feel (or perhaps how you have felt in the past when somebody has used jargon which you haven't understood.)

_____

_____

These are just a few possible responses which come to mind: 'baffled, puzzled, cross, annoyed, irritated, stupid, resentful, embarrassed'.

Whatever particular words you've used, I hope we can agree that two things will happen:

they won't understand
they won't feel favourable towards you

So you need to be very careful when you use technical jargon that your listener is likely to understand. And, if you feel he may not, then you have to explain in plain language what you mean.

And that can be hard work!

In this section so far I hope we've shown how we all adjust the kinds of words we use and the way we put them together to suit whoever we are talking to. Often we do this without having to give it any conscious thought but sometimes, particularly at work or when we're dealing with strangers, we have to give it a bit more thought.

Then, we ought to ask ourselves the following questions:

* Who am I speaking to?

* What sort of relationship do I want with this person?

* What, if anything, does he think about me or what I'm going to say NOW?

* What do I want him to think about me or what I've said after I've spoken to him?

* How much does he already know about what I'm going to say?

* Will he understand the terms I want to use?

ACTIVITY 9
Time guide
5 mins

Here are some examples of supervisors speaking to people in different situations.

Jot down briefly after each one whether you think the way they are talking in each situation is suitable and the reasons for your decision. Use the checklist of questions above as a guide.

1) Part of a presentation to management about a project carried out by the supervisor's workteam

'Well, we've had this project like, for six months. Everybody has. Waste reduction it was. At the start it was going to be on method improvement but then Tom had word that waste reduction was all the thing. Flavour of the month, like, as far as your lot are concerned. So waste reduction was what we did.'

SUITABLE/UNSUITABLE
WHY?
_____
_____

2) Customer Service supervisor on the telephone to a customer who has written to complain

'Good morning. Mrs. Davies? . . . This is the Customer Service department of Affleck and Williamson. I've just received your letter about your fitted carpet. I'm sorry you've been having problems. I wonder if you would just mind going over one or two points with me.'

SUITABLE/UNSUITABLE
WHY?

3) Part of an induction course for new employees explaining what happens when goods are delivered to the factory

'Well, you remember that when you arrived this morning you had to go to security before you could get in to the plant. So does every lorry driver delivering here. The gate across the access road is automatically controlled from security and Bert and Thomas there won't open it until they've checked with Goods In that a delivery is expected.'

SUITABLE/UNSUITABLE
WHY?

4) Section supervisor to the workteam

'I am instructed to inform you that the incidence of pilferage from company premises has risen by a factor of 7 in the last three months. The Management are forced to the conclusion that staff are implicated.'

SUITABLE/UNSUITABLE
WHY?

Here are my views to compare with your own on the way these supervisors were talking.

1) NOT SUITABLE

If he's giving a presentation he will be the only one talking so you would expect him to use better-constructed and larger sentences.

He's talking to management about work done by his workteam so presumably he wants to look polite, efficient and well-organised but he doesn't succeed in any of these.

He isn't polite - nobody likes to be referred to as 'you lot'. He isn't efficient or well-organised in that all he actually says is that his project was on waste reduction - everything else he says is unnecessary.

He should probably be more formal in this situation - and calling waste reduction 'flavour of the month' might not go down very well with management.

2) SUITABLE

This sounds efficient - she's telephoning as soon as she received the letter. A customer who has a complaint is likely to respond better if she gets an apology straight away. But notice that this supervisor apologises for the fact that the customer has a problem - but she doesn't admit that the company is at fault without hearing the whole story.

She's polite and the way she asks for more details 'I wonder if you would just mind . . .' suggests that she's conscious of taking up the customer's time. And if somebody is complaining, then an efficient, speedy, polite response is what they are looking for.

3) SUITABLE

He sounds friendly. He refers to the security men by their first names which includes the new entrants in the team.

His opening remark shows that he's thought about the new entrants and how they must have been through security for the first time that morning.

He starts the story at the beginning, rightly assuming that the new entrants don't know anything about how the factory works.

Although he puts everything simply, he doesn't talk down to them.

4) UNSUITABLE

This sounds very impersonal - the supervisor is just delivering a message from management.

There are too many long words like 'incidence' and 'implicated'.

There are unnecessary facts - who needs to know that pilferage has increased by a factor of 7? It might be more interesting if we knew what that meant in £s.

It's offensive. Perhaps nobody there has stolen anything and they certainly won't want to feel included in the conclusion 'that staff are implicated'.

Well, I expect you found that it's not too difficult to detect what is good or bad about the way other people speak and adapt themselves to their listeners. Getting it right every time when you are doing the talking is much harder but if you follow the checklist of questions to ask yourself, you're halfway there.

EXTENSION 1
page 81

SELF CHECK 1
Time guide
5 mins

Take a few minutes to go over that checklist again by filling in the blanks in the sentences below.

a) _____ am I speaking to?

b) What sort of _____ do I want with this person?

c) What does he think now about _____ or what I'm _____?

d) What do I want him to think about me or what I've said _____?

e) How much _____?

f) Will he understand _____ I want to use?

The answer to this self check is here in the following words, so you'll need to check out your answers carefully. a) who - the first thing to decide is who you are going to be talking to and b) relationship - what sort of relationship do you want or feel would be appropriate with this person; c) next you need to know what is his current attitude to you and the subject you are going to discuss, so I would complete this sentence with 'me' and 'going to say'; d) after I've spoken to him - you need to consider what you want the effect of your words to be; e) to be sure of making yourself understood you must decide for yourself how much your listener already knows - otherwise you may repeat something he already knows or talk above his head so I would complete this statement with 'does he already know'; f) the terms or jargon - if not, how else can you explain what you need to say?

3 Body Language

3.1 Looking as though you're listening

ACTIVITY 10
Time guide
2 mins

Supposing you had a difficult problem to discuss at work - perhaps a personal matter or a problem in your area for which you felt responsible.

Who do you think would be easiest to talk to:

1) somebody who stood with his back to you, looking out of the window?

2) somebody who invited you to sit down but then flipped through papers on his desk and wrote occasional comments on them while you talked?

3) somebody who invited you to sit down, sat down himself, occasionally nodded, asked a question, looked you in the eye now and then?

I hope you chose 3) somebody who invited you to sit down, sat down himself, occasionally nodded, asked a question and looked you in the eye now and then. You might have felt that the person who looked out of the window would be easy because it would be least embarrassing but I think you would find in practice that he was as difficult to talk to as somebody who seemed busy doing something else.

For whether we are talking or listening we are very dependent upon how other people react to us and how they show their reaction without, perhaps, saying a word.

One important feature of a good listener is that he looks as though he's listening.

ACTIVITY 11
Time guide
3 mins

Jot down two ways in which you can look as though you are listening. (I've given you a clue in the previous activity.

* _____

* _____

* _____

* _____

* _____

You can look as though you're listening by:

* stopping doing other things in order to listen
* looking alert, wide-awake, interested
* nodding or smiling occasionally to encourage the speaker to continue
* asking questions
* meeting the speaker's eye occasionally

You may well have thought of other ways as well. Why not add some of these items to your list above for easy reference?

As a speaker you are sub-consciously watching for all these signs that you are being listened to. You probably don't even realise you are doing it unless you don't get the signs you expect. Then you become less confident, perhaps become irritated by the lack of attention and may even start to lose the thread of what you are saying

If you pause for a moment to think of somebody whom you would call 'a good listener' and why it is that you think that about them, I think you will probably decide that one of the things about them that makes them a good listener is that, when you start to talk, they give you the feeling that what you say is of interest and that they are giving you their whole attention, not half of it. And that must be as a result of the signs we have just looked at and for which you are watching.

If we watch people for a reaction when we're speaking, it follows that they are also probably watching us when we talk and 'reading' a message from us which may be quite separate from what we're actually saying.

ACTIVITY 12
Time guide
5 mins

Suppose you have a new boss. On his first day in he job he calls you and your fellow supervisors together for a meeting before seeing each of you individually for an informal chat. There are ten of you, too many to squeeze into his office, so the meeting is in the conference room. You all sit around the table and the new man stands up at the end of the table to say a few words . . . . We don't know what he says.

Before he comes into the room we don't know anything about him. But by the time you leave the conference room you will have formed, rightly or wrongly, a pretty complete picture of him. Forget about what he might say.

Jot down three things about him, the way he looks, the way he talks which you would be looking at and using to build up an understanding of him.

* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____

Well, the list of things you might have been looking for is endless but here are some of the likely points:

* age

* accent - where does he come from? Can I understand what he's saying?

* appearance - does he look fit? Does he look ' up to the job'? What do I think about how he's dressed and turned out?

* facial expression - does he look friendly or hostile or nervous or distant or worried or . . . ?

* stance - how and where does he stand in relation to us? How does he move about?

* gestures - does he have any characteristic gestures that seem to be his 'hallmark'? Does he seem nervous?

* sound of his voice - does he sound friendly or distant, confident, or nervous, interested or disinterested? Is it a pleasant voice to listen to? Is it too fast/too slow? Is it too loud/too quiet? (If it's just the right speed and just the right volume you probably won't even think about it but you're more likely to form a generally favourable impression.)

Why not add some of these items to your list above for easy reference?

Let's look at some of those in more detail.

The only point on the list which you can't do anything about is _____. (Fill in the blank)

Age - unfortunately!

All the others are either entirely or in part in your own hands. The points I've listed under 'sound of his voice' we'll be looking at in Section B so we'll rule those out for the time being.

3.2 Accent

Let's just deal with accent first, although it's not strictly body language.

Everybody has one and English would be much poorer if we all felt we had to speak the same. Of course, if you don't like the accent you have you can try to change it but, in general, if you have a regional accent, hang on to it.

The only question you have to ask yourself is whether people from outside your area understand you. (Not whether they ought to, whether they do!) If not, you may have a problem.

But you can usually get over this by trying to speak a little more clearly - using your lips and teeth a bit more - rather than trying to change your accent.

3.3 Appearance

ACTIVITY 13
Time guide
1 min

Look at this description of a young man who comes to you about a job in your section.

He is six foot five and has a slight limp. His height and the limp are both the result of spending months in hospital in his mid-teens following a motor-cycle accident.

He is pale and has clean, shoulder-length hair. His build is slight. He says he is a keen racing cyclist and oarsman.

Which of the following views of this young man more nearly matches your own view? Answer 1, 2 or CAN'T SAY.

1 Possible rather weak - he limps, he's pale, long-haired, thin - possible weakened by a long stay in hospital. 'Motor-cycle accident' - probably a young, inexperienced driver who couldn't cope with road conditions or was showing off or something.

2 Impressively tall, possibly quite athletic in the sports he has chosen - cycling and rowing.

*

Unless you said can't say in response to that activity you have selected some items of information and ignored others, even though you were given <u>all</u> the items of information.

This is what we tend to do in real life - often with as little justification as we had in this example.

ACTIVITY 14
Time guide
1 min

Look at the description of the young man again.

> He is six foot five and has a slight limp. His height and the limp are both the result of spending months in hospital in his mid-teens following a motor-cycle accident.
>
> He is pale and has clean, shoulder-length hair. His build is slight. He says he is a keen racing cyclist and oarsman.

There is only one item of his appearance mentioned over which he has any control. What is that?

*

'clean, shoulder-length hair' is the only item in the description over which he has any control and which we should feel makes any kind of statement about him.

ACTIVITY 15
Time guide
2 mins

With what other aspects of our appearance do we choose to make a 'statement' about ourselves?

* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____

---

* clothing - what we wear. Does it conform or is it deliberately different from the rest? How important is the colour?
* how we wear clothes. Are they clean, scruffy, dirty, in need of repair or well looked after?
* jewellery - including wristwatches, tiepins, cufflinks
* perfume - including after-shave
* make-up; personal effects - bags, briefcases, calculators, pens, tools.

The purpose of this look at appearance isn't to tell you what you ought to do.

It is simply to point out two things:

1) We tend to judge on appearances, selectively and therefore often unfairly.

2) The items of our appearance which are within our control are statements about ourselves and will be treated as such by anybody watching us.

3.4 Facial expression

To some extent, unless we are born actors, we don't control the expression on our faces. Yet we 'read' the expression on everyone else's with whom we come into contact and expect what they say and how they look while saying it to be consistent.

Somebody who says 'This is the most exciting development we've had in years' while looking the picture of misery will leave his audience unconvinced.

So, if you want what you say to be thought friendly and cooperative, then look it.

3.5 Stance

As well as the expression on your face, your listeners (and watchers) will 'read' the way you are standing or sitting and where you place yourself in relation to them.

ACTIVITY 16
Time guide
5 mins

Here are a few examples of people sitting or standing in a particular way in a particular circumstance. Under each one, jot down briefly what you think is the attitude of the person concerned.

I've suggested an answer to the first one to show you what I mean.

1. Supervisor, giving presentation to factory managers: standing, hands in pockets, occasionally leaning against the wall.

relaxed, casual, perhaps too casual

2. A member of a committee, sitting shoulders drooping, chair pushed back a couple of feet from the table.

3. A supervisor, listening to a complaint from one of his workteam, seated behind his desk but the chair is pushed back. He leans back in his chair, arms crossed.

4. Member of your workteam, standing, half-turned away from the work place, staring into the distance, shoulders slightly hunched.

This is what I would understand about the people in these situations.

2.

He's tired (shoulders drooping). Bored? In disagreement? Thinks it's time the meeting finished? (He's pushed his chair back, cutting himself off from the meeting a bit.

3.

He doesn't believe him or he's going to take a lot of convincing (crossing your arms usually suggests rejection) He doesn't believe him (pushing back his chair and leaning back increases the distance between them.

4.

He's not concentrating. He's thinking about something away from work (turned away, staring into the distance) He may be worried or even in pain (shoulders hunched)

There isn't necessarily one right way of interpreting any of these situations. In real life we would be looking for other clues as well but the point is that, even on this little evidence, we feel we <u>can</u> interpret somebody's feelings or attitude from the way he sits or stands.

And we can be equally sure that people will interpret the way <u>we</u> sit or stand as well.

So how can we create a favourable impression by our stance?

Well, if you have to stand up to speak:

* stand equally balanced on both feet, not leaning heavily on one foot. (This ensures that you stand upright but relaxed which looks good.)

* stand with your feet slightly apart, perhaps as much as 15 inches - you can stand comfortably for long periods that way.

* stand far enough away from your listener to be able to look around the whole group, occasionally looking any one of them in the eye

* rest your hands on the table or behind your back if you are conscious of them. Don't clasp them in from of you - it doesn't look relaxed or confident

If you are sitting down to speak:

* draw your chair up to the table - leaving enough room for comfort of course

* sit comfortably upright, not on the edge of your chair

* don't prop your chin on your hand

* keep your hands above the desk, lightly clasped

You probably won't stay in these positions for long but it is worth making sure that you start off this way and returning to it whenever possible rather than slumping haphazardly in a chair.

3.6 Location

Now let's briefly have a look at the effect of where we stand in relation to the people listening to us.

ACTIVITY 17
Time guide
2 mins

Imagine you are sitting behind a desk and a member of your workteam comes in to see you. You are not sure why, but you suspect it's trouble. He pulls up a chair to the desk and sits down exactly opposite you.

Do you think the discussion is likely to to be: aggressive?
friendly?
non-committal?

* _____

If you sit or stand exactly opposite somebody and quite close, conflict is built into the discussion before either of you says a word, so we can probably say that this discussion is likely to be aggressive.

This doesn't only apply if you are talking across a desk. The same is true if you talk to somebody across their machine or counter or computer terminal or whatever their particular work space is.

ACTIVITY 18
Time guide
2 mins

So if you go on to the shop floor to tell one of your workteam that you want him to change to a particular task which is never very popular would you:

1) tell him across his machine?

2) go round the machine to the same side as him?

3) call out to him in passing and don't wait for an answer?

---

1) you're likely to get a fairly uncooperative reply; 2) he may not like it, but this is the most favourable position you can take up to tell him; c) coward!

So, if we want to establish a cooperative atmosphere (and, at work, we have to) where do we sit or stand in relation to other people to achieve this?

Let's have another look at the situation in the previous activity.

ACTIVITY 19
Time guide
4 mins

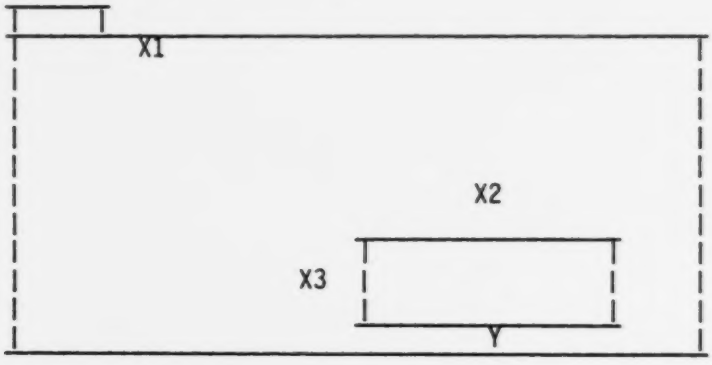
The diagram below represents your office. You sit behind your desk Y

You have three other chairs in the room which I've shown by X1, X2 and X3.

Suppose a member of your workteam comes into your office to see you. You are not sure why but you suspect it's trouble.

Would you keep him standing or would you ask him to sit down?

If you would ask him to sit down, draw a circle round the chair where you would invite him to sit.



Well, presumably you want to sort out any trouble as quickly and easily as possible. So you want the discussion to be short, cooperative and not hostile.

The best arrangement to achieve this, if you are sitting behind your desk, is for him to sit at X3. That way you are near enough to each other to have a private conversation but you are not arranged eyeball-to-eyeball across your desk (as you would be if he sat at X2) and there is likely to be less conflict.

I wouldn't put him at X1, over by the door because then the distance itself becomes a barrier which makes cooperation less likely. Moreover, you are safely tucked behind your desk: he may feel rather exposed sitting in the open on a chair against the opposite wall!

I hope you didn't decide to keep him standing while you sat behind your desk. You may have thought that was one way of keeping the conversation short but the disadvantages outweigh that.

ACTIVITY 20
Time guide
1 min

If you keep him standing in the middle of the room while you sit behind the desk, who has the advantage?

* _____

You have - but he may resent it and be more aggressive as a result.

ACTIVITY 21
Time guide
1 min

If you are sitting behind your desk and he comes up to the desk and leans across the desk to shout at you, who has the advantage?

* _____

He has - and you let him take it. Anybody once sitting down in an office is unlikely to get up and move to another chair. Somebody standing up, however, is much more likely to move around the room and can easily assume a physical advantage -especially if you are sitting down.

So, to have a more controlled, balanced discussion, you both need to be on the same level, either sitting or standing, but preferably seated.

Remember this old piece of advice.

If the police stop you while you're driving to discuss your licence, lights, tyres, driving skills, get out of the car so thas you are on the same level as them - don't give the policeman a two foot height advantage!

3.7 Gestures

We've just looked at the importance of how and where you stand or sit in relation to other people but none of us sit or stand still for very long. To a certain extent we all use our hands to talk and some people are literally tongue-tied if you force them to talk without gesticulating at all.

As listeners, we quite expect a speaker to use his hands to emphasise a point or to demonstrate what he means in some way. We only really notice gestures if they are so dramatic (like flailing your arms wildly while talking) that they prevent us listening with our full attention.

In fact, somebody who speaks without using any gestures at all, we would probably think was giving a very wooden performance.

So, if you are called upon to speak, don't try to manage without your hands. You need them and so do your listeners, to put across the points you want to make.

A lot of work has been done on understanding body language and it is a fascinating study. If you would like to know more, look at Extension 2 for the titles of some books you could follow up.

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So we already know (or think we know) a lot about the speaker without even actually considering what he says. And if we are doing the talking we have already had to give some thought to who we're talking to and what they are going to make of us.

Before we go on to what we actually say, you might like to spend a few minutes checking what we've just done.

SELF CHECK 2
Time guide
5 mins

Respond to each statement by writing TRUE or FALSE in the space provided.

1) Once you start to talk you don't notice who you're talking to. _____

2) Speaking is active, listening is passive. _____

3) If you have a regional accent, people can't understand you. _____

4) It's what you say that matters, not the expression on your face. _____

5) Sitting directly opposite someone is likely to lead to conflict. _____

6) Discussion is easier if you are all seated or all standing. _____

7) Gestures just distract the listener. _____

The answer to this self check is here in the following words, so you'll need to check out your answers carefully. 1) False - we are very much aware of who we are talking to and very dependent on how they react to tell us how to continue; 2) false - listening is hard work and your mind has to be actively engaged. Listening is very different from simply hearing; 3) False - they can probably understand you quite well. There is more likely to be a problem with dialect (regional words) than accent; 4) True - not everytime of course but, if the conversation is potentially hostile, then sitting directly opposite each other will encourage that hostility; 6) True - conversation is helped by all being on the same level physically as well as the same mental level; 7) False - unless they are very extravagent, gestures don't distract the listener and they <u>do</u> help the speaker express his ideas more fluently.

4 Summary

* Successful conversation depends upon:

  an understanding of each other
  a willingness to listen

* The way we speak has to match the people to whom and the situation in which we are speaking. You can do this by considering:

  * who am I speaking to?
  * what sort of relationship do I want with this person?
  * what, if anything, does he think about me or what I'm going to say NOW?
  * what do I want him to think about me or what I've said after I've spoken to him?
  * how much does he already know about what I'm going to say?
  * will be understand the terms I want to use?

* A good listener:

  * looks as though he's listening
  * thinks about the subject being discussed beforehand
  * uses eye contact, gestures and questions to encourage the speaker to continue
  * avoids distractions
  * sticks to the point
  * uses questions to check his understanding
  * listens without pre-judging the speaker

* We communicate by and are influenced by accent
  appearance
  facial expression
  stance
  gesture
  sound of the voice

* Body language should match what we are saying in words if we are to make ourselves clearly understood.

PART B PURPOSEFUL SPEAKING AND LISTENING

1 Introduction

So far we've talked about the ways we speak, depending on the circumstances and the effect of body language on what we say (often more memorable than the words we use).

But there's obviously more to speaking than that. Often at work, we need to have a sense of purpose about what we're saying and, equally importantly, what we're listening to.

Constructive conversations don't necessarily just happen. They need to be prepared for, thought about and directed to make the most effective use of everybody's time.

2 Planning and preparing

Suppose you have to go to a meeting. It may be a union meeting, or to to do with your job or to do with your social or family life.

Before you go, there are several things you hope - that meeting will be 'interesting' for example.

ACTIVITY 22
Time guide
2 mins

Jot down a list of words which describe what you hope any meeting you have to go to will be.

* _____
* _____
* _____

What you have written in response to this activity probably reflects your experience of meetings - good and bad. But I expect on most people's lists we should find:

* short

* constructive

* well-organised, or words to that effect.

Few things are more tiring or a greater waste of time than meetings which are allowed to ramble on for hours and at which no decisions are reached. Probably everybody has had the misfortune to go to such a meeting.

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ACTIVITY 23
Time guide
4 mins

Why do you think long, rambling, pointless meetings happen? Briefly list some of the reasons.

* _____

* _____

* _____

* _____

I hope we can agree that meetings are long and rambling because:

* people talk too much

* they don't give enough thought to what they are saying

* they may be talking for the sake of it, because it makes them feel important.

And meetings are pointless if:

* they are not well-organised

* there isn't a clear reason or holding the meeting in the first place.

Why not add some of these items to your list above for easy reference?

So, looking at this list, perhaps we can say that a good meeting depends on:

NOT TALKING TOO MUCH

BEING WELL-ORGANISED

The same is true of any other situation at work where you have to talk at any length - telephone calls, discussions with your workteam, giving instructions, conducting interviews of any kind, making a speech.

Perhaps it seems odd, if we're considering Speaking Skills to say "Don't talk too much', but there's a good reason for this:

Almost all of us read better than we listen. That is, we can take in more information from a printed page faster and we can concentrate longer than if somebody is talking to us.

Some people can read for an hour, two hours, even longer with a fairly high level of concentration but very few people can listen to somebody talking for more than 40 minutes without losing interest. And for many people, 10 minutes listening is as much as they can stand.

So, whatever the situation, our best chance of being listened to is if we make a few points well rather than trying to make a lot of points and hoping some of them will sink in.

And being able to do this depends upon being well-organised.

ACTIVITY 24
Time guide
3 mins

Suppose you have to make a telephone call - we'll say it's a transatlantic call to emphasise the importance of making the best use of expensive time (but at work nobody's time is cheap).

What would you do to make sure you got the maximum amount of information exchanged in the shortest reasonable time?

* _____

* _____

* _____

* _____

I expect you would:

* make a list of points or items of information you wanted to put across before you started your call

* make a list of questions to which you needed answers write down important items of information or answers to questions as you received them

* go over the main points you had agreed before you rang off.

This technique for making the most of an expensive telephone call holds good for other situations too - meetings, briefing sessions and interviews for instance.

ACTIVITY 25
Time guide
2 mins

Your boss or the branch chairman of your union calls a meeting which you are expected to go to.

Write down what you think is the most important thing he or she should do before the meeting takes place.

* _____

I hope you wrote 'decide what is to be discussed' or words to that effect. You may have said 'write the agenda' since the Agenda is really the list of items to be discussed at the meeting and should be the written evidence that whoever called the meeting has done the necessary thinking.

But the responsibility for being prepared doesn't end with whoever calls the meeting.

If you are asked to the meeting you have a responsibility to get prepared too.

ACTIVITY 26
Time guide
5 mins

Suppose you are a line supervisor in a factory. There are five other superviors in your section but you are chosen to go to a meeting with management to discuss the problem of absenteeism in the last three months. It is now February. What would you do to prepare for the meeting?

* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____

I think I would make the following preparations:

* talk to the other five supervisors to find out their views on the situation in your section;

* find out what the absentee rate for the last three months for my section is;

* if there are any outstanding cases (perhaps some people were off for a long period or off regularly) find out the reason in those particular cases;

* ask myself what I thought reasons for high absenteeism might be.

* It's February at the time of the meeting so you're discussing the mid-winter quarter. Have there been any outbreaks of 'flu or unusually bad weather conditions?;

* I might be able to find out how my section's absentee rate compares with the rest of the factory but, if it's only be hearsay, it's not worth mentioning at the meeting. Why not add some of these items to your list above for easy reference?

You may well have thought of some other preparations you would make too but, if you had done this much, you would be able to make a useful contribution to the discussion and look after the interests of your section.

ACTIVITY 27
Time guide
5 mins

Your own thinking and discussion with your fellow supervisors would probably produce some questions to which you needed answers.

Jot down the questions you would take to the meeting with you.

* _____

* _____

* _____

I would want to know:

* what management were planning to do about absenteeism

* how my section's absentee rate compared with the rest of the factory (if I hadn't been able to find out already)

* how this year's absentee rate for the factory compared with previous years.

And of course, other questions would come to mind during the meeting.

Even if you were going to the meeting intending just to listen, you should make the same preparations.

If someone is talking, we remember what is said better and find it more interesting if we can relate it to our own needs and experience. So, in the case we've just been looking at, if you had an up-to-date picture of absenteeism in your own section, you would get more out of somebody talking about absenteeism at the factory in general.

At the end of this particular meeting you would expect whoever called the meeting to sum up - briefly to re-state the main points that had been made and the decisions reached - and to send you the same information in writing pretty soon after the meeting.

But in other circumstances, a discussion among your workteam for instance, it would be down to you to sum up what had been decided or the attitudes which had been expressed and to make some notes on what had been said.

So I hope we have agreed that planning before you speak should help you speak effectively. You'll also find that during the planning, you probably decide some lines of thought aren't worth bothering with, Which should make what you say more to-the-point.

ACTIVITY 28
Time guide
5 mins

But what about 'not talking too much'? How can we judge the right amount to say?

Let's take the situation of a meeting again. Your company employs 1500 people and there are 10 of you round the table. So the chances are that you may know one or two people there well and some hardly at all.

You're discussing something of concern to the whole factory so, though the meeting is chaired by a senior manager, everybody's contribution could be of equal value.

At this meeting there isn't one overriding factor like cost which will clinch the discussion, so a well-argued opinion might carry the day.

You feel you've got some good ideas and want to put them over at the meeting to maximum effect.

Think about how you would contribute to the discussion and then tick the boxes beside the statements which match what you would do.

Statements which match what you would do.

Don't speak at all until the discussion is almost at an end. ------

Speak within the first few minutes ------

Get in first. ------

Once you've got them listening, tell them all your ideas at one go. ------

Speak several times - one major point each time. ------

Talk for perhaps ten minutes at a time. ------

Talk for as long as you want to. ------

Don't talk for longer than thirty seconds at a time. ------

Talk for a maximum of about two minutes. ------

Say what you have to say and leave the rest to wear themselves out. ------

Argue every point as it comes up. ------

Come in at the end of an argument. ------

I should tick these statements:

* speak within the first few minutes
* speak several times - one major point each time
* talk for a maximum of about two minutes
* come in at the end of an argument.

Research which has been done on how people behave at meetings suggests that the group tends to form a high opinion of people who speak early in a discussion - provided, of course, that what they say is worth listening to.

Speaking first can be difficult - the group may not be 'tuned in' to discussion, you may misjudge the mood of the meeting. It's better for you to let somebody else speak first but obviously someone has to break the ice.

It's a mistake to think that you will have maximum impact if you don't say anything until the end. The group forms an opinion of people during the course of discussion. Unless you have a very strong case or you are a very powerful personality, if you won't contribute until the last moment, you will have lost out.

However, having said that, it's sometimes very effective to come in at the end of an argument, when others are starting to run out of steam, with a short, well-argued statement. But this shouldn't be the first time you speak, if you are going to make maximum impact.

In any case, ideally you will have spoken several times during the discussion already - each time putting forward one of your major arguments or demolishing somebody else's argument.

This would be better than saying everything you have to say on the subject at one go - remember the difficulty people have concentrating for very long. They are likely to remember your arguments better if they have time to think about them and balance them against what other people say one by one, rather than having to cope with them in quick succession. So resist the temptation to blast them with both barrels once you get a chance!

In fact, although, of course, you don't time yourself with a stop-watch during discussion, it's wise not to talk for longer than a couple of minutes at a time unless you are expected to be the only speaker (making a speech or giving a presentation for example).

We've just been talking about speaking during a meeting but the points we've made hold good for most situations, whether you are giving a member of your workteam his annual appraisal or somebody stops you in the corridor and pounces on you with a problem about work or any of the hundreds of other situations at work which involve your having to speak.

Let's go back for a moment to the two features of a good meeting which we looked at earlier:

nobody says too much
it's well-organised

ACTIVITY 29
Time guide
3 mins

Bearing these in mind, what would you say is the main difference between these two situations - both 'meetings' in their own way?

1) giving a member of your workteam his annual appraisal

2) discussing a problem at work with somebody who stops you in the corridor

* _____

_____

_____

_____

The main difference seems to me to be in the time you have for planning what to say. You would obviously spend some time planning an annual appraisal but may have only seconds to plan your response in the corridor.

But sometimes, seconds are enough. Getting yourself organised before you speak is largely a matter of being willing to try!

Let's check what we have said so far about contributing to discussions before we go on to look at how we can steer them.

SELF CHECK 3
Time guide
5 mins

Respond by completing each sentence with a suitable word or words.

1) A good meeting depends upon _____ and _____.

2) We can concentrate _____ when reading than when listening to somebody talk.

3) To get the most out of an expensive telephone call or another situation where time is expensive your should:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

Mark the following statements TRUE or FALSE.

4) 'I'm going to listen so I don't need to prepare'. _____

5) Whoever speaks first makes most impression. _____

6) It's better to contribute to discussion several times than to 'say your piece' all at once. _____

The answer to this self check is here in the following words, so you'll need to check out your answers carefully. 1) first space - nobody saying too much, second space, being well-prepared; 2) better - generally our attention is better when we are dealing with written information than when it's spoken; 3) you may not have the points in the same order as me or have used exactly the same words but you should have written a checklist similar to this: make a list of the points you want to make; make a list of questions you want to ask; write down important information as you get it; go over the main points before you finish; 4) false - listening requires preparation so you'll be able to make sense and use of what's said; 5) false - there's more to making a good impression than that. The first speaker gest the ball rolling; 6) true - ideally you want to join in several times making one major point each time.

3. Steering discussion

So far we have looked at:

the total impact we make when we speak

the importance of matching how we talk to the needs of our listeners

how, by preparation and timing we can make the most effective use of our own time and our listeners' time

But what we haven't considered yet is that listeners are likely to talk back!

We rarely have the floor completely to ourselves. It is far more likely that most of our talking at work is going to be in the form of a discussion with one or several people.

And discussions have to be controlled. This doesn't mean that you don't allow people to speak freely and that you stamp out the opposition. Quite the reverse!

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But if discussions are going to have some kind of purpose (finding out information, training someone, solving a problem) which can be achieved in a reasonable amount of time, then, like a ship, they have to be steered rather than just left to drift on a current.

Often the way that we can most effectively steer a discussion is by asking the right question. So let's have a look at what can be done with questions.

ACTIVITY 30
Time guide
8 mins

Here are four examples of questions. None of them is any good and each of them is unsatisfactory in a different way.

Jot down what you think is wrong beside each question.

1) 'The problem is that documentation from fitters is incomplete and control clerks are unable to order spares on the information that they're getting, coupled with the fact that the suppliers are computerising systems and are hit by recession, isn't it?'

2) 'Do you photocopy these documents? But before that you check the invoice number? And after that, when you've photocopied them, you send them to Despatch? Having put them in numerical order?'

3) The problem is that documentation from fitters is incomplete and control clerks are unable to order spares on the information that they're getting which is slowing down our installation and repair service to below an acceptable level. Do you agree?'

4) (In a committee meeting) 'I'd like to hear some views on this. Jim, could we start with you? . . . . But what about the sales angle, Jim? . . . . What do you think is the likely outcome of that, Jim? . . . .'

Here are those examples again with my comments about what is wrong with them. You may have noticed other things which you don't like as well but I hope, at least, that we agree on the main points.

1) 'The problem is that documentation from fitters is incomplete and control clerks are unable to order spares on the information that they're getting, coupled with the fact that the suppliers are computerising systems and are hit by recession, isn't it?'	This question covers too many points at once - a communication system failure between fitters and control clerks, computerisation of suppliers' system and the effects of recession all in one question. It's an impossible question to answer as it stands. Suppose you agree with some aspects and disagree with others? It's unlikely that you'd remember the beginning of the question by the time the speaker had got to the end! A question like this is likely to slow down discussion because people answering it might start with any one of the points made in the question so the conversation would be likely to ramble in a very unstructured way.
2) 'Do you photocopy these documents? But before that you check the invoice number? And after that, when you've photocopied them, you send them to Despatch? Having put them in numerical order?'	These questions aren't in a logical order and it would be difficult to the person answering to give a straightforward answer. We gather that the job being discussed involves checking an invoice number and photocopying documents. Look at the first question on its own for a minute. Somebody asked that question about the job could equally well answer: 'Yes' (thinking 'I do photocopy them at some stage.') 'Yes, but' (thinking 'I do but not until I've checked the invoice numbers') 'No' (thinking 'I don't until I've checked the invoice numbers.') So, if the questions aren't in a logical order, the answers become unpredictable and, if it's a general discussion that's taking place, people are likely to stop contributing.

3) The problem is that documentation from fitters is incomplete and control clerks are unable to order spares on the information that they're getting which is slowing down our installation and repair service to below an acceptable level. Do you agree?'	This question is too long. Unlike 1, it's all to do with the same topic but it's rather a complicated idea and would be better broken down into two or more questions.
4) (In a committee meeting) 'I'd like to hear some views on this. Jim, could we start with you? . . . But what about the sales angle, Jim? . . What do you think is the likely outcome of that, Jim? . . . .'	Whoever is chairing this committe meeting might as well be talking to Jim on his own, even though he starts by saying that he wants to hear 'some views'. If you are having a discussion with several people, make sure that they are all drawn in and encouraged to contribute. Those who talk most aren't necessarily those who have most to say! But when you do draw people into the discussion avoid going round the table in a fixed order each time even though you might do that once to get the ball rolling. Done too often it makes the discussion rather artificial and people aren't likely to say much.

In the points we've made about these questions we've really covered the basic rules of asking good questions.

ACTIVITY 31
Time guide
4 mins

Complete the following statements with a word or group of words. Look back over the examples if you need to.

Basic rules of questions

1) Questions should cover _____.

2) Questions should be asked in _____.

3) Each question should be _____ .

4) The discussion leader should make sure questions are _____.

I hope you came up with the following rules, though your wording may be slightly different from mine.

1) Questions should cover one topic at a time
2) Questions should be asked in a logical order
3) Each question should be brief
4) The discussion leader should make sure questions are evenly distributed.

So now we know the basic rules, let's have a look at the kinds of questions we can ask.

All the way through this unit you have been answering questions.

Sometimes the question is something like:

1. Do you think the following statements are true or false?

Sometimes they are something like:

2. What do you think the supervisor should do in this situation?

ACTIVITY 32
Time guide
2 mins

Write down what seems to you to be the main difference between these two questions.

* _____

_____

_____

The main difference is that, in the first one, you have a very limited choice of answers - True/False, Yes/No - and in the second you have to think out the whole answer for yourself.

The first type of question we call a direct or closed question (closed because there's no room for discussion, you just want a straight answer).

The second type of question is called 'open-ended' because there isn't necessarily one right answer which we can predict and it encourages discussion.

3.1 Closed questions

Closed or direct questions don't just have to be answered Yes/No, True/False and so on.

'How many years have you worked here?'
'How much alcohol is in that distillation column?'

are direct questions to which you expect a straight answer. Sometimes, of course, a straight answer is exactly what you need and it's quite alright to ask the right question to get it.

But there are disadvantages.

ACTIVITY 33
Time guide
3 mins

Imagine going for an interview for a job at which you were only asked direct or closed questions.

Jot down how yo think you would feel at the end of the interview.

* _____

* _____

* _____

I think you would probably feel that you had had a grilling, not an interview. You would probably also feel that you hadn't had a fair chance to talk about yourself and develop any ideas of your own. And I expect you would have found the interview rather lifeless and artificial.

3.2 Open-ended questions

No let's have a look at open-ended questions - those which can't be answered with a simple 'Yes' or 'No' or a straight factual answer.

These are the questions which get discussion going.

Open-ended questions begin with words like:

HOW, WHY, WHERE, WHO, WHEN, HOW FAR, WHAT, IN WHAT WAY

ACTIVITY 34
Time guide
5 mins

Write down FIVE open-ended questions which you might ask at work. Don't spend too long thinking about the subject matter. At the moment it's how you ask the question that we're thinking about.

* _____

* _____

* _____

* _____

* _____

Obviously I have no way of knowing what you wrote in response to that activity, but here are five examples of my own to show you the sort of question I had in mind.

* What do you think is the worst safety risk in your area?

* Why do you think down-time has been so high this month?

* What shall we do about the induction programme for new starters?

* How far can we depend on them to supply regularly?

* In what ways can you improve housekeeping in the plant?

So, we get the discussion going with open-ended questions and then listen hard to the replies so we know what to ask next.

But we can steer the course of the discussion more accurately than that.

Supposing discussion between you and three of your workteam has been going on for some time. Everybody's opinion has had a good airing and some useful points have been made but you want to bring the discussion to a close, having got some kind of agreement out of it.

You can do this by asking a question like:

Are we all agreed then . . . . .

and then you sum up the main points that you've discussed. (It's also a useful way of preventing somebody who's been talking for too long, from going on any longer.)

3.3 Leading questions

Leading questions are questions which give a broad hint about what you expect or would like the answer to be. These are questions like:

'Don't you think it would be a good idea . . . . .?'

which obviously asks for the answer

'Yes, I think it would be a good idea . . . .'

Sometimes it's fair enough to use a leading question.

ACTIVITY 35
Time guide
3 mins

Can you think of a situation where it would be quite fair to use the leading question:

'Don't you think it would be a good idea . . . . ?

* _____

_____

_____

It would be quite fair to use this question if you had to persuade them to a particular course of action, discussion had been going on for a long time and you had to bring it to a conclusion.

But leading questions can be very unfair because they tend to force your own opinion on to the listener which is likely to annoy him and be unhelpful to you if you are really interested in finding out his opinion.

If you ask a leading question, a shy person will be likely to agree, an argumentative person will be likely to disagree. Either way, you won't know the true opinion of either of them.

3.4 Positive versus Negative questions

ACTIVITY 36
Time guide
3 mins

Look at these two questions. Both of them are about the same topic. In fact, only one word is different in each question. But the effect of the two questions would be quite different.

> Do you think we should introduce a system of fines for unsafe practices?
>
> Don't you think we should introduce a system of fines for unsafe practices?

Jot down what you think the effect of these two questions would be? Which do you think is more likely to produce the true opinions of the people asked?

* _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The first question: 'Do you think . . . . . ' doesn't give any indication which way you expect it to be answered (unless you convey that by the tone of voice you use to ask the question of course) and so listeners are free to give you their own opinion. 'Don't you think . . . . .' is inviting the listeners to agree with you, narrowing down their choices and giving away your own position. 'Don't you think . . . . .?' is a leading question where, perhaps, one wasn't intended anyway. And this can easily be avoided by making sure that you as positive questions (Do you think?) not negative questions (Don't you think?).

3.5 Throwing questions back

We've just said that it's important in a discussion not to force your opinion on your listeners. Sometimes, you may not want to reveal your own point of view in any case for a perfectly good reason.

Perhaps you have been asked to find out the views of your workteam on something like a change in working hours. To do the job effectively, it's their opinions you have to gather, not to influence their thinking with your own.

But if you call a meeting to discuss something like this it is very likely that somebody in the group will try to find out where you stand on the matter. And the more sensitive the subject, the more likely it is that this will happen.

So how do you handle a question:

> 'Do you think it's right that we should have to give up half an hour of our lunch break twice a week?'

You can do it by throwing the question back like this:

> 'Yes, I realise it's a problem. What do the rest of you think about it?'

or

> 'Well, you obviously feel strongly about it. What do you think?'

I don't mean by this that you can endlessly avoid giving a straight answer to any question. Just that sometimes it's useful and productive to keep yourself out of the discussion by asking another question.

ACTIVITY 37
Time guide
8 mins

Here are three examples of questions on which, as a supervisor, you might feel you shouldn't be drawn into giving your personal opinion. Suppose these questions were asked when you were having a discussion with a number of your workteam.

Write down ONE question for each example which you could ask to keep you out of the discussion whilst allowing your workteam to express their opinions freely.

1. 'Don't you think there'll be a strike if this isn't settled by the end of the week?'
   *

2. 'Don't you think management ought to have done something about conditions in the laboratory before now?'
   *

3. 'Do you think it's right that the office are on flexible working hours and we're not?
   *

Here are ways I can think of which would throw the question back to the group. Yours may be quite different from mine but the main point is that you say something which allows the subject to be discussed but doesn't trap you into giving an opinion on a sensitive issue when you don't want to.

1) Well, it's obviously very serious. What do you think is likely to happen?
2) Conditions in the laboratory need improving certainly. What do you think the major improvements should be?
3) Why do you want to be on flexible hours?

3.6 Group and individual questions

All the points we've made about questions so far apply whether you are speaking to one person on his own or to a group.

But, assuming that you are leading a discussion in a group, you might decide to ask a question which is directed to the group in general or a question which is directed to a certain individual.

Let's look at a group question first.

ACTIVITY 38
Time guide
5 mins

Suppose you are leading a discussion at which retail supervisors and buyers are present and you ask a group question:

> 'What are your views, as buyers and as supervisors actually dealing with customers, on the spring promotion?'

Jot down some of the things you might hope to achieve by such a question.

For example, first on the list of what a question like that would achieve, I should put:

* To get everybody thinking
* _____
* _____
* _____

I should complete the list of things I should hope to achieve by a group question like this:

* To get everybody thinking
* To get the discussion going
* To get different opinions and feelings
* To get a more complete picture of the situation under discussion.

You might also have said that a question like

> 'What are your views, as buyers and as supervisors actually dealing with customers, on the spring promotion?'

would bring out the points of similarity in the ideas of the two groups of people.

So, if you want to do any of these things, you would probably start with a group question.

Supposing nobody replies?

Then you pause for a few seconds to give everyone time to think and then ask a particular individual who you think can be relied on to say something useful.

So - 'What are your views, as buyers and as supervisors actually dealing with customers, on the spring promotion? . . .(pause) . . . . Hugh, would you like to start?'

In the same way as you can ask group questions to achieve something quite specific (such as making everybody start to think) so you can aim questions at particular individuals in a discussion for a number of reasons.

Let's take the same situation again.

ACTIVITY 39
Time guide
10 mins

You are leading a discussion among retail supervisors and buyers about the success of a spring promotion.

Seated around the table are Sarah, Hugh, Anne, John, Alan and Mary.

Here is a little information about each person and the questions that you happen to ask each of them individually at some stage during the meeting.

Beside each question write down what you think your reason for asking that question might be.

1. The meeting has been going for twenty minutes and Sarah hasn't said anything yet. You ask her: 'How could the spring promotion be improved in your area, Sarah?'

2. Hugh has been saying that he didn't feel the spring promotion was a great success because it met with resistance from the customers. You ask him: 'What do you mean by "resistance", Hugh?'

3. Anne joined your company last year as a buyer. She has a lot of experience in buying and marketing for other companies. You ask her: 'How do you think our spring promotion compares with our competitors, Anne?'

4. John and Alan are seated at the far end of the table from you and are having a private conversation. You ask one of them: 'Could we hear how things went in your area, John?'

5. It is 3.00 p.m. Mary has been out to lunch with a supplier. She is sitting with her back to the window through which the sun is shining. She is obviously nodding off. You say to her: 'Mary, have you had a chance to give any thought to the next promotion?'

Here are my comments on each of those situations and individual questions.

1. The meeting has been going for twenty minutes and Sarah hasn't said anything yet. You ask her: 'How could the spring promotion be improved in your area, Sarah?'	This question would make Sarah think for herself. She may have something useful to say, she may be shy or she may just be idle.
2. Hugh has been saying that he didn't feel the spring promotion was a great success because it met with resistance from the customers. You ask him: 'What do you mean by "resistance", Hugh?'	This question would encourage Hugh to be more specific rather than talking in general terms.
3. Anne joined your company last year as a buyer. She has a lot of experience in buying and marketing for other companies. You ask her: 'How do you think our spring promotion compares with our competitors, Anne?'	This question draws on Anne's particular knowledge and experience. A contribution from her could add a lot to the general discussion.
4. John and Alan are seated at the far end of the table from you and are having a private conversation. You ask one of them: 'Could we hear how things went in your area, John?'	Asking either one of them a question will obviously put a stop to their private conversation and should draw them back into the group discussion. If the question is asked in a fairly pleasant manner, without suggesting any criticism of them, it is a much more tactful way of pulling them into line than saying something like: 'Do you <u>mind</u>, you two?'
5. It is 3.00 p.m. Mary has been out to lunch with a supplier. She is sitting with her back to the window through which the sun is shining. She is obviously nodding off. You say to her: 'Mary, have you had a chance to give any thought to the next promotion?'	This question should wake her up! Asking them a direct question will usually draw back any members of the group who are nodding off or merely daydreaming. But try not to ask them too hard a question! Your aim is just to bring them back to the meeting, not to show them up in front of the rest of the group. At the very least, Mary could get away with saying, 'No, I'm afraid not.' in response to this question.

So, from that example we can establish what you can achieve with direct, individual questions in a group discussion.

ACTIVITY 40
Time guide
3 mins

Complete the following statements. Look back at the previous activity if you need to.

Direct, individual questions will

1. make an individual member _____.
2. _____ shy members _____.
3. encourage members to be more _____.
4. make use of members' _____.
5. prevent members _____

   or _____

   or _____.

Here are the responses I suggest for that activity though you may have slightly different wording from mine. Direct, individual questions will:

1) make an individual member think for himself

2) encourage shy members to contribute

3) encourage members to be more specific

4) make use of members' knowledge and experience

5) prevent members having private conversations or daydreaming or going to sleep.

In our examination of what you can do with questions, we have concentrated on how you use them if you are leading the discussion. This leadership may be quite formal and clearly-defined (e.g. you have called a meeting) or informal and unstated (e.g. you are talking to your workteam) but, simply because you are supervisor you will tend to have a leadership role in the discussion.

However, being able to ask the right questions is just as much a skill of a good listener. So, to finish off this section, let's look at two more kinds of questions which you might use particularly when you are mainly listening.

3.7 Prompting and probing

We've already agreed that listening is active. You can't just sit back and let it happen: it requires just as much concentration as talking.

And sometimes the speaker needs help from you to give you the information you need to understand what he's trying to say.

You give this help by asking prompting and probing questions.

Prompting questions are simply questions which encourage the speaker to continue. Like:

'And then?'
'So what did you do next?'

It may only take a questioning lift in the voice to give the speaker a prompt or you may have to help him sort out his ideas like this:

'Did anything else happen?'
'Is there anything more I should know?'

Probing questions are slightly different in that they encourage the speaker to continue along certain lines which you set because you want to know more. For example:

'What did you do immediately before the fuse blew?'
'What exactly did the customer say to you?'

3.8 Summary

Finally, if you've been listening to one person or a group of people talking to you for several minutes, you need to check that you've got the story right - either that you can remember the important points or that you have formed a balanced view of several people's opinions.

The best way to do this is to say something like:

'Let me get this straight. Are you saying that ....?'

A summary question like this can be a very important tool. It clarifies everybody's thinking and makes sure that you and the people you are talking with, stick to the point. And sometimes that's no easy matter as we'll see in the next section.

Before that though, spend a few minutes checking what we have said about questions.

SELF CHECK 4
Time guide
10 mins

Respond by completing each sentence with a suitable word or words.

1. The four basic essentials of a good question are:

   a. the question should be _____

   b. the question should deal _____

   c. questions should be _____ arranged

   d. in a group, questions should be _____

2. Mark the following questions CLOSED/OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

   a. What shall we do with the drunken sailor?

   CLOSED/OPEN-ENDED

   b. Did you come in the main entrance?

   CLOSED/OPEN-ENDED

   c. How long have you been working here?

   CLOSED/OPEN-ENDED

   d. Why haven't you answered my letter?

   CLOSED/OPEN-ENDED

Fill in the blanks in the following statements.

3. Open-ended questions encourage _____

4. Leading questions may be unfair because they _____

5. You can use a leading question if you have to _____

   or _____

6. 'Don't you think . . . ?' is a leading question inviting the answer 'Yes'.

   '_____?' is not a leading question.

The answer to this self check is here in the following words, so you'll need to check out your answers carefully. 1) questions should be brief, deal with one topic, logically arranged and evenly distributed around the group; 2) a) open-ended - it demands a thoughout answer which could be anything b) and c) closed - they can either be answered Yes of No or given a brief, direct, factual answer, d) like a) this needs thinking about and working out an answer - it's open-ended; 3) discussion - as you can probably work out from question 2; 4) leading questions may be unfair because they expect a certain reply and force your opinion on somebody else; 5) but you may fairly use a leading question if it's important that you persuade your listeners or time has run out and you have to bring the discussion to a conclusion; 6) "do you think . . ?' isn't a leading question because it doesn't invite a particular answer.

4. Sticking to the point as a listener

Sticking to the point should be easy. You plan what you're going to say, leave out what isn't important, ask the right questions to keep the discussion on course - that's all.
Or is there more to it than that?

Well, of course, there is and the difficulties arise when we find it difficult to stick to the point as listeners rather than as speakers.

The problem starts with the fact that we can think much faster than anybody can talk so, if the idea they are explaining, isn't in itself very interesting or very difficult to grasp, we have plenty of spare thinking time to pursue a line of our own.

So the first think we have to do as listeners is to make a conscious effort to concentrate on the subject being discussed and not to half-listen and half think about something else. If we don't, the 'something else' usually wins and we stop listening to what we are supposed to.

One way we can keep ourselves concentrating when someone is talking is mentally to ask ourselves questions about what he is saying.

'Do I agree with that?'
'In my experience, is that so?'
'Is there something in this I can use in my section?'

We also have to work at resisting distractions.

ACTIVITY 41
Time guide
3 mins

Imagine you are sitting in a briefing session about a new product your company is going to launch.

The speaker is not very good. He paces to and fro, crossing a squeaking floor-board on each trip. He coughs nervously every minute or so.

From where you are sitting you can see the acess road where the gate is raised electronically to admit lorries delivering to the plant. You've counted fifteen already.

A new warehouse is being built and you can hear the sound of steel girders clanging and pneumatic drills.

The person you are sitting next to sighs heavily and says to you out of the corner of his mouth 'One born every day, isn't there?'

Write a list of all the things which might distract you in this situation.

* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____
* _____

You can be distracted by:

* Things you see, particularly if they are moving. So - the speaker pacing to and fro, the gate being raised and lorries passing

* Things you hear. So - the speaker crossing the creaking floorboard, the sounds from the new warehouse site.

Even more though, we are easily distracted by:

Other people. So - the speaker himself is a distraction if we don't like the way he is giving the talk and we don't like his nervous cough. The person sitting next to us can be doubly distracting, we can be distracted by his sign and his obvious boredom and also by his attitude - 'There's one born every day.' - which encourages us to join him in disapproving of the speaker.

The only real distraction there though is the noise from the building site. If it is so loud that we simply physically can't hear, then we're entitled to be distracted and we ought to do something about it like moving to another room or closing the window.

All the other distractions can be resisted if we make sufficient effort to concentrate on what is actually being said.

So, let's suppose that we can do all this and can concentrate at quite a high level when listening to somebody else. What next?

The next major step is to keep an open mind and to let the speaker finish what he has to say.

This not only means letting him get the words out without interruption but also, mentally, listening to the whole idea he is putting across rather than listening to the first few items and then either assuming what he will say after that or switching off completely.

Look at this example.

ACTIVITY 42
Time guide
5 mins

Kevin, aged 20, is being interviewed for a job as an electronics technician by the Personnel Manager and the Section Supervisor. Here is part of the conversation:

Kevin: 'Well, when I left school at 16 I didn't do anything for a bit. Then I got in with the people who started Radio Belmarine - it ran from a ship off Teesmouth. I started just by helping them out odd times and I got more and more interested in the technical side. After a couple of months I was there all the time, looking after all the electronics, maintaining the equipment and building it up as the station became more popular.

In the end I was there two years then I thought that if electronics was really what interested me, I'd better get some proper qualifications, so I went to college for two years altogether to get the B/Tec certificate in electronic engineering and now - as you see - I'm looking for a job. I'm glad I spent the time I did with Radio Belmarine though. It was great and I learned a lot about electronics.

Personnel Manager: Radio Belmarine? Weren't they closed down a couple of months ago?

Kevin: Yes. Of course, pirate radio stations can't expect to last all that long. We had a good run for our money. Anyway all the people I worked with had left long before it was closed down. Soon after me in fact.

Personnel Manager: Wasn't there some trouble with drugs? Didn't the police find a load of heroin on their boat and <u>then</u> they closed them down?

Kevin: Yes .... I believe they did. But I don't really know ... I left two years ago.

We can guess from this some of what the Personnel Manager is thinking. What is the only thing he has really listened to in what Kevin said?

* _____

What does he appear to have ignored?

* _____

Do you think the Personnel Manager is giving Kevin a fair hearing if this extract from the interview is typical?

* _____

He has only really listened to the fact that Kevin worked for Radio Belmarine.

He has ignored the fact that he has two years experience of working with electronics and has been at college for two years getting some qualifications.

I don't think he is giving Kevin a fair hearing if this extract is typical.

He has done something which we are all prone to at times. As soon as a certain topic is mentioned (in this case Radio Belmarine) he has made certain assumptions and has not <u>listened</u> to what is acatually being said.

He hasn't interrupted Kevin but he hasn't really heard him out either.

Everybody has very strong views about certain topics and we find it difficult actually to listen if they are under discussion.

'Communists'	'unions'
'terrorists'	'management'
'queers'	'redundancy'

are just some words which will make many people react strongly one way or another and make them less likely to listen to what is being said with an open mind.

Everybody's list of 'triggers' which make them react strongly will be different, at least in part.

ACTIVITY 43
Time guide
4 mins

Spend a few minutes writing a list of the topics to which you know you react very srongly. Think particularly about any topics which are likely to be raised at work.

* _____
* _____
* _____

I have no way of knowing what topics are on your list, but writing the list is a useful exercise because it requires you to be honest with yourself. Next time any of these topics are mentioned you will know that you should be on your guard.

Don't switch off.

Listen to the whole idea.

And then, of course, join in and demolish the speaker's argument in an informed way!

REFERENCE 3
page 83

Unlike other sections, the self-check this time is in two parts first of all - listen!

SELF CHECK 5
Time guide
15 mins

Listening self check

1) Try to listen to a whole radio news bulletin (10 minutes approximately). Then ask yourself what items were mentioned and in what order.

2) Look at your list of personal 'triggers' again and try not to react blindly next time any of them is mentioned.

3) Next time you are in a discussion with somebody, notice what distractions there are.

   Remove any distractions that can be removed.

   Notice what can't be removed and make a conscious effort not to make them an excuse for not listening.

SELF CHECK 6
Time guide
5 mins

Written self check

Complete the following statements with a suitable word or group or words.

1 We can improve our concentration as listeners by asking ourselves _____ and by resisting _____.

2 Keeping an open mind as a listener means listening _____.

3 The only good excuse for not continuing to listen is _____.

The answer to self check 5 is here in the following words, so you'll need to check out your answers carefully. There obviously is no way that I am able to comment on how well you lisen. But testing your concentration by seeing how well you listen to a news bulletin will give you a good idea of what your present listening performance is like.

And we are almost all very poor listeners - listening at 25% efficiency isn't at all uncommon. So the chances are that this self check has shown you that you have some room for improvement.

The answer to self check 6 is here in the following words, so you'll need to check out your answers carefully. 1) first space - about what is being said, second space - distractions; 2) to the whole idea - once we shut down listening to think about one particular point (usually one with which we disagree) we have closed our minds; 3) not being able to hear what is being said is the only good excuse for not continuing to listen.

5 Summary

* Good meetings depend upon: not talking too much
  being well-organised

* To make maximum use of time spent in discussion:
  * make a list of questions to which you need answers
  * write down information as you get it
  * go over the main points to check understanding before the discussion finishes

* The most effective contributions to discussions:
  * are made fairly early in the discussion
  * and reinforced at the end of an argument
  * don't take longer than two minutes at a time
  * only argue one major point at a time

* Questions can be used to steer discussion.

  They should be: brief
  logically arranged
  relating to one topic only
  evenly distributed around the group

* Closed and direct questions - obtain information
  * Open-ended questions - encourage thought and discussion
  * Group questions - get discussion going and produce a more complete picture of the subject under discussion
  * Individuals questions - use individual knowledge and experience and make sure individuals contribute
  * Leading questions - anticipate a certain answer - alright if you <u>have</u> to end the discussion
  * Prompting questions - encourage a speaker to continue on lines you've set
  * Summary questions - check understanding and agreement

PART C SPEAKING ON YOUR OWN

1 Introduction

Everybody feels nervous at the prospect of having to speak. Even speaking in a meeting of some kind is bad enough if you're not used to it but standing up while everybody else is seated, watching you and waiting for you to begin is an ordeal.

And, even if you become an experienced speaker, it's an ordeal that you never entirely get used to. If you have to speak to an entirely new audience or on a subject which is very different from your usual, then you are as nervous as ever.

In fact, coping with nerves, rather than trying to suppress them is half the battle in being a competent speaker.

If you haven't had to speak much before you may also feel that you haven't much confidence in your voice.

Will they be able to hear you?
Will it sound all right?

In fact, very few people are unable to speak loudly and clearly enough to make themselves heard in a room full of people, provided they learn or instinctively use a few simple techniques which we shall be looking at in this section.

And, if you have well-prepared notes you should avoid the other nightmare of speakers - drying up.

REFERENCE 4
page 83

2 Speaking technique

Suppose you have to make a speech at the retirement party of one of your workteam and you have never had to speak in public before.

You stand up and the room falls silent.

Your heart pounds, your hands shake, you feel hot and sweaty, your throat is dry - you feel dreadful.

This is because the adrenal glands, just above your kidneys, have released adrenalin into your system to give you a quick surge of energy and, if that energy isn't immediately used, you become aware of the unpleasant side-effects.

However, these feelings do not last very long so it's mainly a question of coping with them for a minute or two.

ACTIVITY 44
Time guide
3 mins

Think for a moment of somebody who you have listened to giving a speech who was nervous. Perhaps it was somebody at work or at a wedding or a party.

Jot down what signs the speaker gave that he was nervous when he started to speak.

* _____

* _____

* _____

Well, the ways of showing nervousness are endless. But common signs are that the speaker:

* fiddles nervously with tie, cufflinks, jewellery, hair, papers

* clears his throat unnecessarily

* his voice may come out too high, or may not come out at all.

The first two of these signs are a direct result of the adrenalin being pumped into the system.

Your body is asking for the surge of energy to be used up somehow and, if you don't provide it, it will find a way of its own by nervous, meaningless gestures or coughing and throat-clearing to relieve the dry throat sensation.

So how can you off-load this surge of energy?

Well, it helps if you have to walk a few yards to where you are to speak or if you have to arrange your papers on the table or some similar activity.

Otherwise, clench your fists very tightly and then relax them as slowly as you can several times.

Next, it's a question of getting the breathing right.

Take several slow, deep breaths before you start to speak.

Now practise this.

ACTIVITY 45
Time guide
5 mins

Think of an opening line to be a speech. It doesn't matter if it's nonsense.

'Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking' would do.

Take three, slow, deep breaths then begin your speech three times as follows:

1) as you are breathing in

2) at the peak of the breath, when your ribs are momentarily locked

3) as you are breathing out

Which do you think is the best way to begin?

The best way to begin is to speak as you are breathing out. That way your breathing is relaxed and the words are more likely to come out in an even flow in something like your normal voice. In fact, as you probably discovered, it's very difficult to start to speak when you're breathing in.

It can be a temptation to start to speak at the peak of a breath, especially if you're nervous but this isn't a good idea. Your ribs are momentarily locked so you haven't any real breath control and breath and words are likely to fall out in a pretty haphazard way.

So you're ready to begin.

Now the problem is how to prduce enough sound to fill the room.

ACTIVITY 46
Time guide
1 min

Do you think you produce volume from your chest or from your throat?

From your chest. Once again it's a question of getting the breathing right. If you breathe from as deep down in your chest as possible you will find you are able to produce much more volume than your normal speaking voice without a feeling of strain (such as you have if you shout for more than a few seconds at a time).

Trying to produce more volume from the throat isn't successful and just creates a strain on your voice. It also tends to produce a rather reedy, thin speaking voice which isn't very enjoyable to listen to.

This is one of the reasons that people's voices tend to rise when they are nervous.

The other reason is that there is a general tightening of the throat muscles which restricts the air-flow.

Although breath control makes a lot of difference to how successfuly you can make yourself heard, there are a few simple techniques which will improve your performance further.

1) Keep your chin tilted up slightly.	Not so far that you get a crick in your neck or you cannot see your notes. But if you make a conscious effort to keep your head up slightly, it stops you directing your voice down towards the floor and helps your voice to carry to the back of the room.
2) Talk slightly nasally.	If you haven't got a very powerful voice you can make it carry better if you talk slightly more through your nose than usual. It helps if you think in terms of talking with a slight American accent - but make it <u>slight</u>.
3) Direct your voice round the room.	Move your head slightly. Speak towards <u>all</u> your listeners in turn wherever they <u>are</u> sitting. Concentrate especially on those sitting near the back.

Finally, if you know that you have to stand up and speak at some future date, you have time to prepare. As well as preparing what you're going to say and the notes, if any, from which you are going to speak, you have time to get used to your own voice.

That may seem rather an odd idea but for many of us, the first time that we become aware of own voice is when we are faced with the prospect of having to stand up and speak.

ACTIVITY 47
Time guide
2 mins

Suppose you have to make a speech which is important to you in a week's time. You are quite happy about <u>what</u> you're going to say but you are slightly anxious about how you will <u>sound</u>.

Jot down what you could do to find out how you will sound on the day.

* _____

* _____

* _____

Here is what I would suggest:

* Find out where you have to speak so you can have a quiet practice. You have to remember, though, that your voice will carry much better in an empty room than when it is full of people.

* Tape record your own voice. You might tape record what you are planning to say or something different. When we hear ourselves on a tape recorder we are much more aware of our characteristic voice pattern - almost the 'tune' to which we speak. Everybody has such voice patterns but some people's are more varied than others. If your speech pattern strikes you as very monotonous or your voice dies away at the end of a sentence and it is difficult to hear then you still have time to experiment and produce a more varied pattern. A tape recording of your own voice will also give you an idea of whether you speak too quickly or too slowly. It's better to be a little on the slow side - most people tend to speed up when they're nervous in any case.

* Ask a friend to listen to you. This can be useful if the friend will check that you can be heard at the back of the room and that you haven't any istracting mannerisms which might put your listeners off. You do need somebody who has an interest in the subject of your speech though and whose judgement you trust. Or, if you just want moral support, you need someone whom you can rely on to be kind!

3 Speaking from notes

ACTIVITY 48
Time guide
1 min

If you were listening to somebody play the piano would it make any difference to your enjoyment if they had the music in front of them?

YES/NO/DON'T KNOW

I hope you ansered No or Don't Know to this question. Either you know it wouldn't make any difference to your enjoyment or you've never given the matter any thought which shows how little difference it would make.

We might admire somebody who can play for a whole concert without needing music but this skill doesn't really add to our enjoyment of the actual performance.

The same is true when we listen to someone speak. Some people can speak very well and at length without notes and some feel more confident and perform better if they have notes to refer to.

So, wherever you have to speak, at a meeting, in a briefing group, making a speech, even making a telephone call, use notes if you feel they will help you do the job more effectively.

ACTIVITY 49
Time guide
2 mins

Suppose you have to make an important presentation about your workteam's efforts. The Managing Director and some of the Board will be there and so will all the people you work with. One supervisor has been asked to contribute to the presentations and that one is you.

Would you:

1) write notes on a small piece of paper which you could hold in the palm of your hand so nobody could see it?

2) write very full notes which contain everthing you want to say and further information so that you can deal with questions?

3) write brief notes to act as reminders for the main points you want to make?

I hope you chose 3) write brief notes to act as reminders for the main points you want to make.

If you've decided to use notes, there's no point in trying to hide them from your listeners. Why should you? If they are so small that the audience can't see them, they'll be too small to be much use to you either.

On the other hand, when you stand up to speak, you won't be able to make much sense of a closely written page of notes containing a lot of information either. It's also very distracting for your listeners to have to sit and watch you shuffling a sheaf of papers.

You may feel though that, at some meetings or a briefing session where you may be asked for a lot of information, that you need the facts at your fingertips.

That is fair enough. Have it with you, but not in amongst your speaking notes.

If your notes are just key words to remind you of the points you want to make, it follows that when you actually speak, you can't just read your notes aloud. You've got to find the actual words to explain your idea as you go along.

This may sound rather daunting but, as long as you have key notes to rely on, it's not so difficult. And it certainly comes across to your to your listeners better than any other way of speaking.

* It sounds more like conversation rather than being rehearsed

* If you just refer to your notes occasionally, you can look around your listeners and get their response to what you are saying

* If somebody asks you a question, you can deal with it, then glance back at your notes to find your place and carry on.

If you don't find the words as you go along, it means that you have either to:

memorise what you want to say word for word

or

read from a prepared script.

There are some advantages and more disadvantages to doing either of these.

ACTIVITY 50
Time guide
5 mins

Jot down below any advantages or disadvantages to these methods of speaking which you can think of.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Memorising	
Reading	

Memorising

The main thing which you may feel could be an advantage as the speaker (or victim!) is that you have thought out every word beforehand and shouldn't have to 'think on your feet'.

This is true but, in practice, when you prepare key word notes you form a fairly clear idea of precisely what you will say so the words are there, it's just that you haven't made a deliberate attempt to learn them by heart.

The disadvantage of memorising are that what you say can easily sound rather wooden and rehearsed and, worst of all, you run the risk of drying up and simply forgetting what you were going to say.

This can happen at any stage but particularly if somebody stops you to ask a question. Having answered the question, it can be very difficult to pick up again where you left off.

So on balance there is very little to be said for memorising what you intend to say.

Reading

The obvious advantage to reading is that you can't forget or miss anything out or get it in the wrong order - it's all in front of you. So, understandably, it's a great temptation to an inexperienced speaker to write out a full statement of what he wants to say and then read it.

Sometimes this may be the wisest thing to do. If, for instance, you have to use a lot of technical detail or give a lot of figures then accuracy is important and it's probably safer to read it.

But, if you do read, the disadvantages are all for your listeners. You tend to look down at your script so your voice drops and may become difficult to hear. Unless you are quite skilled, you don't sound the same reading as speaking spontaneously and you don't look around your listeners and make contact with them so their attention will quickly start to wander.

So, on balance, it's better for your listeners if you don't read unless what you have to say contains detailed information which you must get right.

Having said that though, it can be a great help to you if you have written out in full your opening remark and the sentence with which you want to finish.

How you begin and how you finish make quite an impression on your listeners. Of course the 'meat' of what you say is, you may reasonably feel, the most important thing as far as you're concerned but a good opening can get your listeners alert, interested and on your side and a good finish can leave them with the impression of an interesting and well-organised contribution from you.

So, what makes a good beginning and ending?

ACTIVITY 51
Time guide
10 mins

Look at the following examples and jot down whether you think each is good or bad and why you think that.

GOOD/BAD

1. 'Well, I - um - as you know, I haven't done much of this speaking so I - um - can't promise to do anything very much. But, as I've been called on to say a few words about work in my section - component assembly - Well, here goes . . . .' _____

2. 'It gives me great pleasure to take this opportunity to say a few words, if I may, on this important occasion about the contribution that the Slithorpe plant has made to the fantastic success of the Delta project. In this day and age . . . . .' _____

3. 'This is Jack's evening and we all know that Jack isn't one for speeches. He's already threatened me with what will happen if I make one, but we can't let him go, can we, without letting him know how much we . . . .' _____

4. 'For the last six months, we have been working, (twenty five hours a day sometimes) on the Delta project. As the section supervisor, I'd like to explain a bit about . . . . ' _____

5. 'Well, I think that's about all . . . Yes, I think so. That's it then.' _____

6. 'So the main thing for us is to keep up the same level of work in the next financial year. And for that we need your support. Thank you.' _____

Here are those openings and endings again with my comments.

1. 'Well, I - um - as you know, I haven't done much of this speaking so I - um - can't promise to do anything very much. But, as I've been called on to say a few words about work in my section - component assembly - Well, here goes . . . .'

Bad. Listening to this, you might sympathise with his nervousness but you wouldn't be impressed. If you say you're not going to be any good, listeners will tend to believe you. You shouldn't apologise for yourself. By the time you stand up to speak, you are committed so you might as well make the best of it.

He's also rather slow to get going. We don't know anything about what he's going to talk about, only that he hasn't the self-confidence to do it. It would be better if he got to the point straight away as the speaker does in 4.

(I wouldn't criticise him though for the couple of hesitations he makes - 'I - um -, as you know.' We all do this to a certain extent and our listeners are quite prepared for it. To try to speak without any hesitations just puts an unnecessary strain on you.

2. 'It gives me great pleasure to take this opportunity to say a few words, if I may, on this important occasion about the contribution that the Slithorpe plant has made to the fantastic success of the Delta project. In this day and age . . . . .'

Bad. Unlike the previous speaker, he seems to have self-confidence and he gets to the point quickly but almost every word he uses is overworked and will make no more impression on his listeners than the piped music in a supermarket does.

'It gives me great pleasure ... to take this opportunity ... say a few words ... fantastic success ... in this day and age'.

You don't necessarily have to say anything extraordinary as your opening remark but you should at least say it in words that you have thought of.

3. 'This is Jack's evening and we all know that Jack isn't one for speeches. He's already threatened me with what will happen if I make one, but we can't let him go, can we, without letting him know how

Good. He gets to the point immediately and in a friendly way.

He immediately gets his listeners on the same side as himself ('but we can't let him go, can we ...')

His performance is confident - he makes a slight joke of the fact that Jack doesn't want speeches - and doesn't apologise for himself.

4. 'For the last six months, we have been working twenty five hours a day sometimes) on the Delta project. As the section supervisor, I'd like to explain a bit about . . . '

Good. This is really very similar to 3 although the situation is different. The speaker gets to the point straight away and makes a slight joke ("twenty five hours a day sometimes") to establish a friendly relationship with the listeners.

Both 3 and 4 are very different from 2 in that they don't use any overworked expressions or ideas that the listeners would have heard dozens of times before.

5. 'Well, I think that's about all . . . . . Yes, I think so. That's it then.'

Bad. In the same way as you don't want to start to speak with an apology for yourself, so you don't want to finish by just letting your subject peter out. You can throw away a good well-organised talk by such a feeble ending as this. This is why it is often useful to include in your notes exactly what you want the last line to be. Quite frequently your listeners won't even know that you have missed out part of what you intended to say if you finish with a flourish.

6. 'So the main thing for us is to keep up the same level of work in the next financial year. And for that we need your support. Thank you.'

Good. This is much better than 5. The speaker repeats the main point of his speech very briefly ('the main thing for us is to keep up the same level of work ...') and leaves his listeners in no doubt about what he wants from them.

And, having finished, he stops - without any vague remarks about this being the end.

Notice too that he thanks his listeners at this point. If you feel it is appropriate to thank your audience for their response then this is the time to do it - at the end.

So from this we can draw up a checklist of do's and don'ts to bear in mind when you are writing your speaking notes.

* Don't apologise for yourself
* Do get to the point as soon as possible

* Don't use overworked language

* Do thank your audience at the end if it would be appropriate

* Don't just peter out. Finish firmly.

In this section we have tended to assume that you are making a speech of some kind but, with the possible exception of thanking your listeners, all the points on our check list apply just as much to other situations, such as meetings, where you find yourself having to speak.

EXTENSION 4
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If you were listening to me rather than working through the unit this is the point at which I should say:

'I suggest that you spend a few minutes now working through the Self Check. Thank you for listening so patiently. I have enjoyed talking to you'

and then I should sit down.

SELF CHECK 7
Time guide
10 mins

Answer the following statements TRUE or FALSE.

1 Experienced speakers don't suffer from nerves. TRUE/FALSE.

2 Taking several slow, deep breaths before you start to speak helps. TRUE/FALSE.

3 You should begin to speak at the peak of a breath. TRUE/FALSE.

4 You produce more volume from your throat, not your chest. TRUE/FALSE.

5 If you have a monotonous speaking voice there's nothing you can do about it. TRUE/FALSE.

6 No good speakers use notes. TRUE/FALSE

7 Good speaking notes act as memory triggers only. TRUE/FALSE.

8 You should never read from a prepared text when you are speaking. TRUE/FALSE.

9 It's a good idea to apologise for your shortcomings as speaker before you start. TRUE/FALSE.

10 Your listeners' impression of what you say is affected by how you start and finish. TRUE/FALSE.

The answer to this self check is here in the following words, so you'll need to check out your answers carefully. 1) You never completely get over nerves before speaking and you would probably perform worse if you did - it's false to think otherwise; 2) It's true to say slow, deep breathing helps; 3) You want to start to speak as you begin to breathe out, not at the peak of a breath; 4) You'll just strain your throat if you try to produce more volume there - the volume comes from your chest; 5) It's false to say you can't do anything about a monotonous speaking voice - try tape-recording it, then deliberately varying the pattern, sentence length etc; 6) This isn't true. Some good speakers don't use notes but many do; 7) This, on the other hand, is true; 8) It depends what you're talking about. If it contains detailed figures or technical information the sensible thing may be to read it so this statement is false; 9) It's not!; 10) The beginning and the end make quite a significant impression so this is true.

4. **Summary**

* Being nervous when speaking on your own is unavoidable.

  It can be coped with by:

  controlled exercises to use up nervous energy

  taking a few slow, deep breaths to steady the breathing.

* Begin to speak as you breathe out.

* Produce enough volume by breathing deeply, not by straining the throat.

* Make your voice carry by:

  tilting your chin up slightly
  speaking slightly nasally
  directing your voice around the room.

* If possible practise in the room where you are to speak.

* Tape record your voice to check speed and voice patterns.

* Use notes if you feel they will be useful.

  If so: don't try to hide them
  write key word notes, not a full text
  except for the opening and closing remarks.

* Be confident
  Don't be apologetic
  Get to the point quickly
  Don't use overworked words and expressions
  Finish with a flourish-don't peter out
  Thank your listeners at the end if it is appropriate.

PART D PERFORMANCE CHECKS

1 End Check

Time guide 60 mins

You may now review your understanding of the unit as a whole by completing this group of questions. DON'T GUESS THE ANSWERS - if you're not sure, flick back into the unnit and check before responding.

If you are still unsure then put a question mark against your response before proceeding.

TRUE/FALSE

Respond to each statement by writing TRUE or FALSE in the space provided.

1 To be a good speaker you have only to be able to speak well _____

2 You should be able to speak the same way to everybody _____

3 It is quite acceptable to use jargon sometimes _____

4 You can do half a dozen jobs at the same time as you are listening _____

5 We can think several times faster than anybody can talk _____

6 You shouldn't use closed questions at an interview _____

7 Leading questions may force an opinion on people so you should never use them _____

8 Apologising for your unskilled performance gets the listeners on your side when you have to make a speech. _____

Completion

Respond by completing each sentence with a suitable word or words

9 Listeners repond to _____ we speak as much as to what we say.

10 When we are speaking we need _____ from our listeners or we may start to falter.

11 If you want to have a cooperative, constructive discussion with someone, you should get him to sit _____ you.

12 Before making an important telephone call you should _____ you need to know.

13 You should take to meetings any information which _____.

14 To make an impression during a group discussion you should speak _____ of the discussion and again _____.

15 You can leave your listeners with a good impression of you as a speaker if you _____.

16 Ideal speaking notes are _____ which act as _____.

Multiple Choice

Respond to each question by putting a tick against the ONE answer which is most correct.

17 Long, well-constructed sentences are a feature of:

a) informal speech

b) formal speech

c) a good education

d) a previously prepared statement

18 Formal speech is:

a) better than informal speech

b) what's expected if you're dealing with management

c) appropriate for some occasions

d) unnatural

19 If somebody come up to your desk, obviously looking for an argument you should:

a) get him to sit down opposite you

b) keep him standing

c) stand up yourself

d) sit him at the side of your desk, at an angle to you

20 Gestures are:

a) a way of helping us put our ideas across

b) only of use to the listener

c) something which good speakers don't use

d) a distraction from what we're saying

21 Open ended questions are:

a) a sign that the questioner hasn't thought the subject through properly

b) likely to lead to rambling discussion

c) questions which indicate what you expect the answer to be

d) a way of making everybody think for themselves

22 Throwing questions back to the group means:

a) you don't know the answer

b) you are putting an end to the discussion

c) you don't want to give your own opinion

d) as the leader of the discussion, you can't cope

23 If you are worried about being able to make your voice carry you should:

a) practise with a tape-recorder

b) shout

c) begin to speak as you exhale

d) speak slightly nasally

24 A member of you workteam is going to retire and you will be expected to make a speech. Would you:

a) jot down a few points about the person retiring and a suitable joke on a card whch you can glance at if you need it?

b) write you speech and learn it off by heart, including the jokes?

c) say the absolute minimum since you don't like making speeches?

d) spend a long time writing a good speech with plenty of jokes and then read it on the night?

END CHECK - Checkout

Audio Tape Side 2 Time guide 35 mins

The answers and explanations for these End Checks are on Side 2 of our Audio Tape. Have your responses with you as you play this tape. As you listen you can check out how well yo have done and make notes as you proceed.

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2 Tutor check

Time guide 60 mins

On side 1 of the Audio Tape after the introduction to the unit you will find two short conversations.

In the first, Mr O'Connor, a Personnel Manager, is talking to a member of staff, Janet, who asks to see him.

In the second, Miss Mackay, a supervisor, is trying to sort out a problem with Robert, who works in her section.

How well do you think each of them copes with the situation? What are the reasons for your answer?

How do you rate their performance as listeners?

To answer this question you would have to decide how it is that they show whether they are listening actively and making good use of the time.

As you listen to the tape I suggest that you jot down the points in the conversations on which you are judging their performance and which you will need to refer to in your answer.

You can listen to the tape as often as you need.

It may help you with your answer if you refer to this list of some of the features of a good listener but I hope you will also notice some other points in the conversations which you would like to comment on.

A good listener:

* looks as though he's listening
* uses eye contact, gestures and questions to encourage the speaker to continue
* avoids distractions
* sticks to the point
* uses questions to check his understanding
* listens without pre-judging the speaker

Send to tutor

Now get your answers to your study tutor either by post or handing it over personally. You will receive your tutor's assessment back through the post as soon as can be managed.

3 Work based project

Time guide 60 mins

Think of a situation at work where you have to speak at some length. It may be on which has already taken place or one which you expect to happen in the future.

Some possible situations which you could consider, though you do not have to use any of these, are:

* a meeting at which you represent your workteam or section
* an interview - disciplinary or job selection
* a briefing session for your work team
* a presentation to management
* your contribution to an induction course for new starters
* an appraisal - your own or one you are giving somebody else
* a speech - on somebody's retirement for instance

Assuming that you can expect to talk for between three and five minutes without interruption, plan what you would say in the situation you have chosen

* Write some brief notes describing who you are talking to, the occasion and the sort of relationship you are trying to establish with whoever is listening
* Write key word notes from which to speak
* Tape record three to five minutes of what you would say in the situation you have chosen as though you are speaking to your intended audience.

Send to tutor

Now send your notes describing the situation, your speaking notes and your audio-cassette to your study tutor either by post or handing it over personally. You will receive your tutor's assessment and comment back through the post as soon as can be managed.

PART E UNIT REVIEW

1. Return to Objectives

Having completed your work on this unit, let's review how you feel about each of our four opening objectives. I'll repeat them here and add comment.

You should be better able to:

* ADAPT HOW YOU SPEAK AND YOUR NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION TO THE NEEDS OF YOUR LISTENERS.

Although often we don't give it much thought, we all have at our disposal a wide range of ways of speaking depending upon whom we're with and we can put our ideas across most effectively if we match the way we talk to the needs of the people listening. We also have to remember that listeners are also watchers and they 'read' as much about us from how we look, how we stand, our gestures and expressions as from what we actually say.

If you find that you are now more aware of your own range of expression and of the importance of body language, you have achieved this objective.

Now to the next objective -

You should be better able to:

* PLAN, PREPARE AND CONTRIBUTE TO SPEAKING AND LISTENING

Often, of course we have to react quickly to changing circumstances, but planning and organising what you are going to say can become a way of thinking rather than just something you do when you have plenty of time.

A few minutes spent preparing for a telephone call so that you get all the information you want first time, can save you and the person receiving your call considerable time in the end. The same is true of meetings or any formal or informal gathering at work.

And, once in a conversation, you can get to the point quickly and steer the discussion so that it makes the maximum effective use of the time available by the questions you ask and the way in which you ask them.

If you feel that you are now more likely to go to meetings of any sort adequately prepared and better able to contribute to discussion in terms of timing and giving and finding out the information you want, then you have achieved this objective.

So to the third objective -

You should be better able to:

* LISTEN EFFECTIVELY

Listening too requires preparation and a considerable amount of self-discipline. It's by no means a passive occupation which enables you to sit back and let somebody else do the work. Listening can be hard work!

If you feel that you are now better aware of what is involved in listening effectively and have a plan which will help you to improve you listening skill, then you have achieved this objective.

Now to our final objective -

You should be better able to:

* USE SIMPLE VOICE TECHNIQUES AND PLANNING TO ENABLE YOU TO GIVE A CONFIDENT PERFORMANCE

Perhaps to be an extremely good speaker is partly a gift but everybody can become at least a competent speaker. Being adequately prepared takes work, not inspiration. And the knowledge that you have prepared as well as you are able, that you have useful notes to rely on and that you know how to project your own voice well enough to make yourself heard, should at least give you some measure of self confidence, even though nothing will help you to overcome the nerves which we all feel at the prospect of having to stand up and speak in public.

If you feel that you would have some guidelines in future about how to put together what you have to say and how you would make yourself heard then you have achieved this objective.

I hope that this work you have done was enjoyable and useful enough to encourage you to continue your studies.

2 Extensions

I recommend that you take up as many of these extensions as you can. They will further increase your understanding and interest. You will also be able to check out a number of the ideas that I mention in the unit. The extra time and effort will prove very worthwhile.

EXTENSION 1

Book: The Choice Series: 60: Communicating
Author: Steven Lane
Publisher: Northern Regional Management Centre

If you are interested in how the communication process worked and the various factors which come into play when we communicate with each other in different ways and a variety of situations, then you might find it useful to work through this unit, which takes a broad view of the whole nature of communication.

EXTENSION 2

These are just three suggestions which you might like to take up to find out more about how we communicate with each other, deliberately and unintentionally, without saying a word.

Book: Body Language
Author: Julius Fast
Publisher: Pan

Book: Gestures - Their origin and Distribution
Author: Desmond Morris
Publisher: Panther

Book: Man watching - Field Guide to Human Behaviour
Author: Desmond Morris
Publisher: Panther

EXTENSION 3

16mm film or video "Meetings, Bloody Meetings'
produced by Video Arts

Although, as its title suggests, this film is about preparing as a listener, speaker or chairman, for meetings, it makes some very sound points about how to organise your ideas for speaking in any situations which may arise at work.

EXTENSION 4

If you do find yourself having to give a talk of some kind then you may find this book helpful, particularly Chapter 7

The Business of Communicating - Improving your Communication skills

Author: Nicki Stanton
Publisher: Pan - Breakthrough series

These extension opportunities can all be taken up via your Resource Centre.

They will either have the materials or will arrange that you have access to the materials. However it may be more convenient to check out the materials with your Personnel or Training people at work - they may well give you access. There are other good reasons for approaching your own people, for example they will become aware of your interest and you can involve them in your development.

3 References

REFERENCE 1 Book: Effective Speaking and Presentation for the Company Executive
Author: Clive T Goodworth
Publisher: Business Book

Chapter 2 deals with how we create our 'speaking personality' and vary our manner and language to meet the needs of the people we are talking to.

REFERENCE 2 Book: Supervisory Studies
Author: P W Betts
Publisher: Macdonald and Evans

Chapter XII - Section on Group Discussion

REFERENCE 3 Book: Supervisory Studies
Author: P W Betts
Publisher: Macdonald and Evans

Chapter XII - Section on The Art of Listening

REFERENCE 4 Book: Effective Speaking and Presentation for the Company Executive
Author: Clive T Goodworth
Publisher: Business Books

Chapter II deals with coping with nerves and preparing to speak.

These references can all be taken up via your Support Centre. They will either have the materials or will arrange that you have access to the materials. However it may be more convenient to check out the materials with your Personnel or Training people at work - they may well give you access. There are other good reasons for approaching your own people, for example they will become aware of your interest and you can involve them in your development.

If you do wish to make use of these references then don't think that youmust read them right through. Just dip into them for a slightly wider treatment of the topic raised by the unit.

I should warn that the language and style of the writing is often difficult to cope with. So don't struggle with it too much. Do what I do when in difficulty, put the book back on the shelf and find a better one!

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